



# Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

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## Business Meeting May 11, 2016

### I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. PAC Board member Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Bill Guthlein, Past PAC Chair Nancy Sherburne, Secretary Kathy Luce, and Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies were present as well as Director of Special Education Mary Emmons, School Committee representative Paul Murphy, and five other members.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from March 9, 2016, were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes and passed unanimously. Meeting minutes from April 13, 2016, were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes and passed unanimously.

### III. Organizational/Business Issues

#### A. Monthly Meetings

1) The Director of Special Education will need a list of PAC speakers from the last couple of years for the CPR (Coordinated Program Review). 2) There are a number of new hires in process, both at the administrative level and within the schools. 3) There will be communication issues to resolve moving forward since the direct reports that currently go to the Director of Special Education are slated to be divided between the new Assistant Superintendent for Student Services (Out of District, early childhood) and the new Director of Special Education. The PAC will need access to both administrators. 4) The Chairs met with special educators at the school level this year and that would be valuable to repeat next year. 5) Continued implementation of the APPLE plan (discussed extensively at previous meetings). 6) The PAC is still waiting on certification information for staff in buildings. There was a bottleneck on this information at the building level and the department is very busy with CPR preparation. 7) AB SpEd PAC leaders have attended IEP meetings as parent support to take notes for parents. The district sees this as a conflict of interest so the PAC is continuing to discuss this with the department. The idea of having other parents within schools take notes or coordinating with parents in other towns was discussed.

#### B. New Director of Special Education Candidate Community Forum Update

It was noted that there was a small applicant pool for this position. Only five parents, including PAC officers Amanda Bailey and Kathy Luce, attended the Community Forum for the single finalist. The PAC is awaiting to hear the outcome of the search.

#### C. Reviewing and Revising Open Issues

##### MCAS 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA poor performance among students with disabilities

The PAC analyzed the March 2015 testing results. There was a multi-year trend of poor performance. The Director of Special Education noted that SRSD (Self-

Regulated Strategy Development) was implemented in all elementary schools except McCarthy-Towne. The Student Services and Curriculum departments covered the cost of training the staff.

Futures Education findings, RE: student to assistant ratios high by peer standards  
This finding was in 2013. The Director of Special Education said that the Walker Partnership was conducting a small program review. Bill said that he analyzed data in the DART system in the DESE website and it showed a low ratio of students per assistant, but a high ratio of students to special education teachers when compared to the comparable communities group defined by the ABRSC. The Director of Special Education added that the district was looking at how to use assistants based on an advisory by the DESE. This item may be revised to reflect the size of special educators' caseloads rather than assistant ratios.

Concerns about the process for combining outside specialists' recommendations with district evaluations/recommendations and appropriately incorporating those recommendations into the IEP

The PAC will review the responses to the 2015 parent/guardian survey.

Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff—hiring dual-certified staff

Starting July 1, all general education staff will need 15 PDP (professional development points) in special education and 15 PDP in ELL to recertify. The Director of Special Education noted that the district sometime offers classes to help teachers attain their PDP.

Enhanced summer school and after school/extracurricular programming.

This issue should stand based on the 2015 parent/guardian survey results.

Increased use of technology in IEP development/revision process

The Director of Special Education suggested automating progress reports. This issue should stand based on the 2015 parent/guardian survey results.

#### D. Brainstorming PAC Goals and Priorities for 2016-17 School Year

The PAC needs district partnership to get goals accomplished. Establishing communication/connection between PAC and new administrators will be key. Communication is primary goal identified by parents. We need a communication map of administration so we know where to take information and know who to talk with, especially for summer school. It was noted we're losing institutional knowledge and relationships with all the new openings. The Parent Handbook needs to be revised with new information, i.e., Pathways, regionalization, bullying.

#### E. Description of PAC Officer Positions for Elections June 8<sup>th</sup>

Information is available on the PAC website. The PAC can have up to three Co-Chairs. There is also a list of volunteer opportunities (liaisons to school, social chair, bring goodies to meetings). You can talk with Amanda outside of the meeting if you have questions. The Friends of organization needs a Treasurer since the current Treasurer is moving. Nancy will send a blurb out about that.

**F. Parenting Support Hour**

Leaders are trying to organize a late afternoon/weekend get together/social during the second week of June. They are looking for another person to add to facilitate.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

More inclusive programming continues to be discussed. There is a local program pairing social skills with soccer (10 pairings). Kicks With Care is co-sponsored by Acton-Boxborough Youth Soccer and the Miracle League meeting kids at their level with lots of high fives, handshakes, and bracelets (positive reinforcement).

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

**VI. NEXT MEETING – Annual Meeting & Elections Wednesday, June 8, 2016 at the R.J. Grey Library at 7:30 p.m.**

*Respectfully submitted by Kathy Luce, Secretary and Blossom Davies*